

Building Evidence from the Ground Up: Project Overview & Summary of Focus Group Findings



NAYA Family Center Staff Presentation
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Korinna Wolfe, NAYA
Terry Cross, NICWA

Pauline Jivanjee, RTC/PSU
Jody Becker-Green, NICWA

Thank You!

Your participation in
the focus group
discussions was
valuable



Project Overview

- Practice-Based Evidence: Building Effectiveness from the Ground Up
- Five-year collaborative effort between the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA), National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA), and the Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health (RTC)
- Purpose – to explore strategies for documenting the effectiveness of NAYA's services
 - 2005-2006 definition of youth success

Partners

- National Indian Child Welfare Association, Portland, OR
- Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health, Portland, OR
- Native American Youth and Family Center, Portland, OR

National Indian Child Welfare Association

Mission

NICWA is dedicated to the well-being of all American Indian children and families.



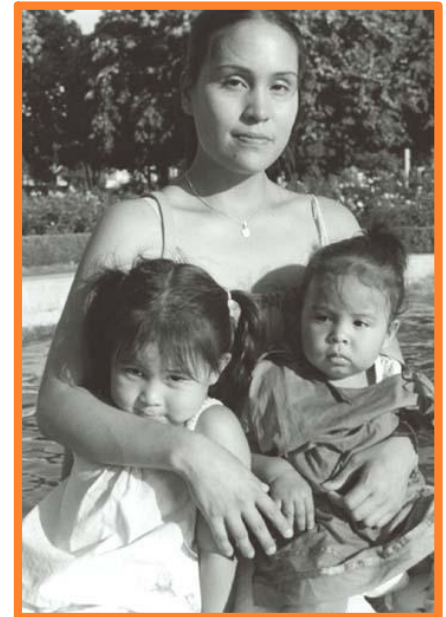
NICWA

National Indian Child Welfare Association

Protecting our children • Preserving our culture

What is NICWA?

- An Indian-operated, private non-profit, membership organization located in Portland, OR since 1983
- An advocate for the proper implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act
- The nation's leading American Indian resource for child welfare:
 - Information and Training
 - Community Development
 - Public Policy Analysis a
 - Research and Evaluation





Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health

Mission

The RTC is dedicated to promoting the well-being and full community participation of children, youth and families affected by mental health difficulties. Research is designed to increase knowledge of supports, services and policies that:

- Build on family strengths;
- Are community based, family driven, and youth guided;
- Promote cultural competence; and
- Are based on evidence of effectiveness.

Research and Training Center

This project is one of 6 research projects in the Research and Training Center.*

- Increasing youth participation and voice in service planning;
- Helping families with young children make the transition from Head Start to kindergarten;
- Exploring youth/family perspectives about community integration;
- Transition planning for older youth;
- Issues that families face in the workplace as they try to meet the needs of their children with mental health challenges; and
- Practice-based evidence with tribal youth and families.

*Jointly funded by the Center for Mental Health Services (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; SAMHSA) and the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR);

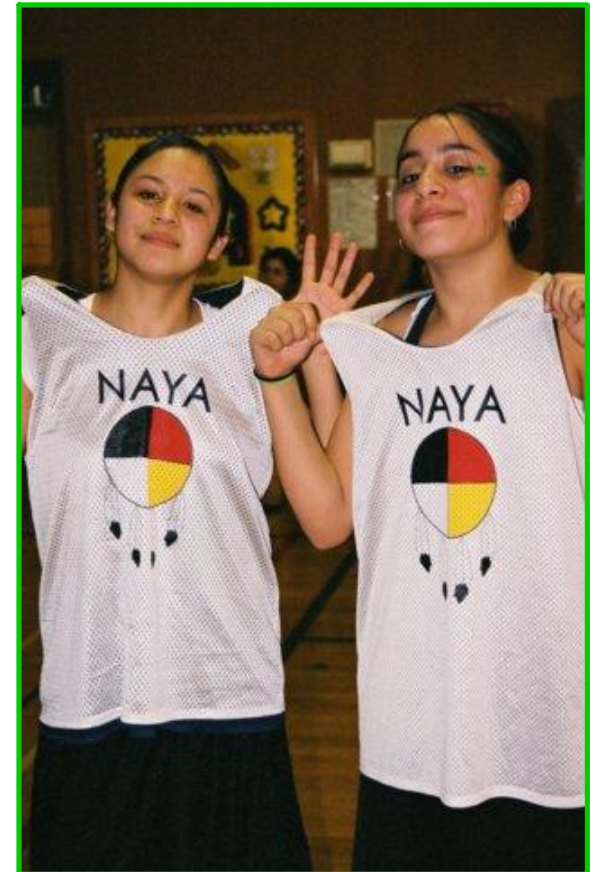
Native American Youth & Family Center

Our Mission

...to enhance the diverse strengths of our youth and families in partnership with the community through cultural identity and education.



Cultural Arts and Sports Program



Educational Programs

Middle School
Program

Tutoring Center

High School
Program

High School
Summer
Institute

Spring, Summer,
& Winter Camps



Youth and Family Services

Foster Care Program

Pathways

Independent Living
Program

Healing Circle

Housing and
Employment
Programs



NAYA's Challenge

- To demonstrate the effectiveness of agency-wide services and the organization as a whole.
 - Accelerated by state and federal requirements for evidence-based practices (e.g. Oregon SB267).

Project Goal

To increase knowledge about research methods that are appropriate for the evaluation of practice effectiveness for culturally specific and community-embedded services, with attention to research strategies that may also be more generally applied



Evidence-Based Practice (EBP)

- Definition: Knowledge obtained through scientific methods about the prevalence, incidence, or risks for mental disorders, or about the impacts of treatment or services.... (Hoagwood, Burns, & Weisz, 2002, p. 329).
- Advantages:
 - EBP is one way of increasing the likelihood that services will be effective;
 - EBP should be cost effective – services that are provided are known to be those that work;

Evidence-Based Practice (EBP)

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- Criteria for evidence base (Kazdin, 1996)
 - Theory to relate a hypothesized mechanism to a clinical problem
 - Basic research to assess the validity of the mechanisms
 - Preliminary outcome evidence to demonstrate that a therapeutic approach changes the relevant outcomes
 - Process-outcome connections, which display the relationships between process, change, and clinical outcomes (p.378)
- Randomized controlled trials are considered the gold standard

Evidence-Based Practice (EBP)

Concerns:

- ❑ EBP often do not reflect the complicated lives and needs of many children and families;
- ❑ The determination of “evidence” is narrow and focuses on linear cause-effect relationships (Webb, 2001);
- ❑ Most EBPs exclude newly developed interventions, traditional healing practices, and therapies developed by specific cultural groups (Espiritu, 2003; Huang, Hepburn, & Espiritu, 2003).
- ❑ EBPs often neglect the cultural and contextual influences on children and families (Espiritu, 2003; U.S. Public Health Service, 2000, Friedman, 2004);
- ❑ There is often a lack of attention to family choice (Brannan, 2003; Huang, Hepburn, & Espiritu, 2003).

Practice-Based Evidence (PBE)

- ❑ **Definition:** PBE is information gathered from service providers, families, and youth used to identify effective interventions and areas for program or practice improvement. Participatory research methods are integral.
- ❑ **Advantages:**
 - Information about desired goals and outcomes come directly from the people receiving services;
 - Cultural factors can be explicitly included in outcomes and interventions;
 - Effectiveness can then be measured according to these outcomes.


Practice-Based Evidence (PBE)



❑ Concerns:

- Developing practice-based evidence is a “ground up,” lengthy process;
- Establishing evidence of effectiveness is challenging because it must be accepted as legitimate by
 - The cultural community that is involved
 - The scientific community.

Conducting Research In Indian Country

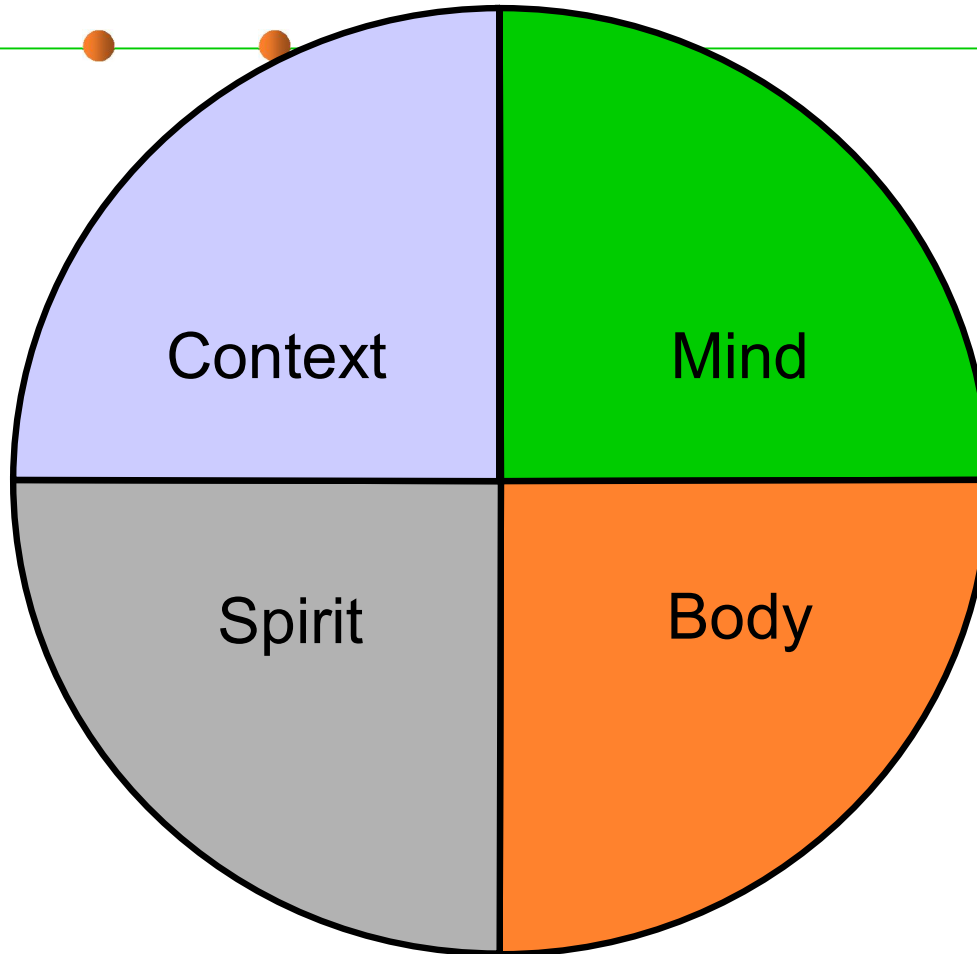


“Native people in the United States are among the most researched people in the world. Outsiders have studied everything – our religions, our hunting practices, our sexual lives, and our health and education. Very little of that research has benefited us”
(Crazy Bull, 1997, p.1)

Participatory Research

- Research is collaborative
- Researchers partner with communities in determining research questions, design, methodology, data collection, protocol, and ownership of data
- “Studies that practice participatory research with American Indian/Alaska Native communities are also likelier to succeed among American Indians/Alaska Natives” (Davis & Reid, 1999)

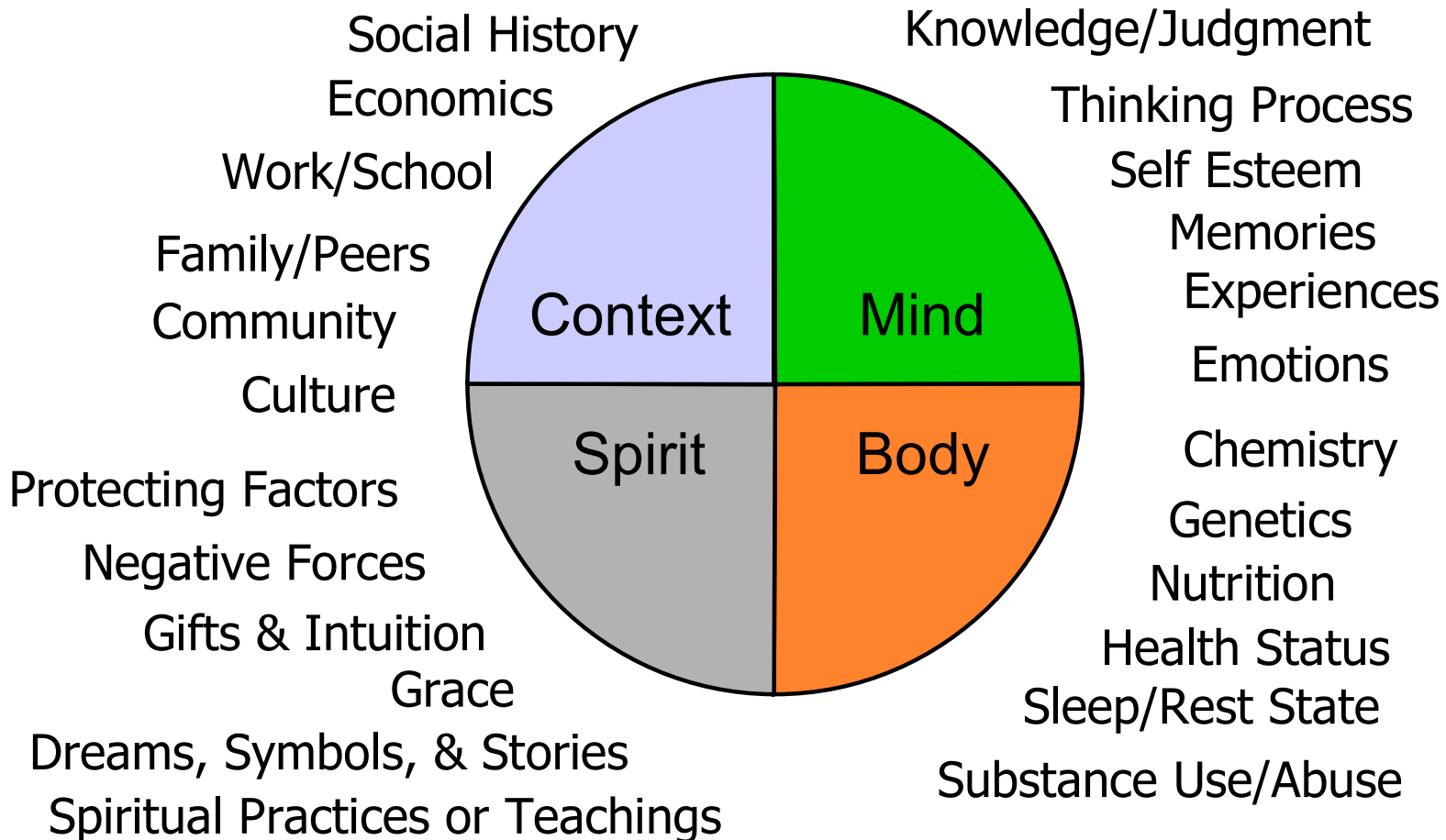
Relational Worldview Model – Individual & Family Level



BALANCE

Relational Worldview

Individual and Family Level



Relational Worldview Model

Change is:

- Constant: Complex interactions between the quadrants are going on all the time, influenced both by experience and perceptions of experience and the balance states that have come before.
- Inevitable: The human organism has a natural tendency to seek harmony and balance, to heal, or adjust, relieve stress, and reacts to the stimuli by changing (flight-fight, etc.).

Relational Worldview Model

Change is:

- Cyclical: Change in harmony and balance follow patterns of natural cycles of the days, months, seasons, and life span.
- Dynamic: All change is multi-dimensional. Nothing in any quadrant can change without every other aspect of the other quadrants being effected. Changes are a combination of linear and multi-causal, multi-effect relationships.

Desired Outcomes

- **Balance**

An adjustment pattern that represents the best, most basic attempt to incorporate stimuli and response

- **Harmony**

Various aspects of life are in a complementary relationship and taken together produce wellness, beauty, growth, success, the capacity for joy and the ability to thrive

Relational Worldview Model

Practice and Evaluation

- A change agent joins with the natural forces, and with purposeful intent, impacts the quadrants to restore balance and promote harmony
- Interventions do not necessarily target symptoms but rather impact balance and facilitate harmony, and are frequently designed to impact multiple quadrants.
- Change can be measured by observing key indicators of balance and harmony and recording change across time in relationship to the intervention(s).

Defining Youth Success

- Focus groups with nine diverse stakeholder groups
 - middle school youth
 - high school youth
 - Pathways youth
 - family members
 - elders
 - community partners
 - NAYA program managers, staff, and board members



Process

- Individual recruitment of youth, families, elders, and community partners
- Human subjects approval and consent process
- Food, transportation, and meeting space
- Facilitator and notetaker
- Child care
- Participant review of notes



Focus Group Questions

- What does success look like for Native American youth?
- What is necessary to help support youth in achieving success in their lives?
- What are the conditions that hinder a youth's progress toward success?
- How do NAYA Family Center services contribute to a youth's success?
- Are there other things that NAYA could be doing that would be helpful?
- Is there anything else you would like to add that we have not talked about?

Youth Perspectives on Success



Context

- ❖ Following and or being a positive Native American role model
- ❖ Having someone tell you “good job” and giving you a high five

Mind

- ❖ Feeling proud and peaceful
- ❖ Finishing something like high school or college

Youth Perspectives on Success

Body

- ❖ Basketball teams to occupy our time
- ❖ Walking a mile
- ❖ Being physically fit

Spirit

- ❖ Connected to Native American side
- ❖ Knowing our ceremonies



Staff Perspectives on Success

Context

- ❖ Making positive contributions to the community through service
- ❖ Thriving in an environment of instability
- ❖ Mastery of a cultural art to tie them to ancestors
- ❖ Involved in positive groups

Mind

- ❖ Maintaining in school
- ❖ Celebrating their own successes
- ❖ Being proactive and taking initiative
- ❖ Being able to de-escalate

Staff Perspectives on Success

Body

- ❖ Being active, getting exercise
- ❖ Not having body image issues, being okay with your body
- ❖ Knowing how to shop for and cook healthy food, including diabetic diets

Spirit

- ❖ Freedom to explore spirituality, experience it, and express it
- ❖ Being able to own your spiritual heritage
- ❖ Respecting elders
- ❖ Humility and generosity



Program Manager Perspectives on Success

Context

- ❖ Peer groups are an important source of support, especially for young men
- ❖ Importance of a continuum - - variety of support services to families

Mind

- ❖ Education is the gateway to opportunities - some are at college because they saw it was expected of them
- ❖ To become self-reflective, take responsibility, and avoid blaming others
- ❖ Showing appreciation is a small sign of a successful process

Program Manager Perspectives on Success

Body

- ❖ Physical activities (e.g., hiking and rafting) provide more options for healthy living and positive experiences

Spirit

- ❖ Spirituality is a long-term goal, need to consider developmental factors
- ❖ Kids are seeing things that are not spiritual at all and they want information



How NAYA Services Contribute to Youth Success - Youth

Context

- ❖ Having a place to go
- ❖ Take our mind off all the racism that we always experience

Mind

- ❖ Give us a chance to be leaders
- ❖ Having moral and emotional support



How NAYA Services Contribute to Youth Success - Youth

Body

- ❖ Activities such as basketball, canoeing, nature gathering, drum classes, dances, etc.
- ❖ Food

Spirit

- ❖ Make us feel proud to be who we are
- ❖ They understand where you came from

How NAYA Services Contribute to Youth Success - Staff

Context

- ❖ Place to have a sense of belonging
- ❖ Contact with community members
- ❖ Place for fun activities for youth and families together



Mind

- ❖ Trust building with others
- ❖ Teach self-efficacy
- ❖ Positive reinforcement and honoring their achievements
- ❖ Encourage youth to take risks and expand their comfort zones

How NAYA Services Contribute to Youth Success - Staff

Body

- ❖ Exposure to outdoor activities
- ❖ Place to play basketball and other physical activities
- ❖ Food

Spirit

- ❖ Unconditional positive regard
- ❖ Exposure to Native spiritual activities (e.g., dance class, cultural classes, and trips)
- ❖ A safe place to be who they are

How NAYA Services Contribute to Youth Success – Program Managers

Context

- ❖ NAYA is a safe place for children to gather
- ❖ Functioning, helpful, and caring adults available
- ❖ Provide skills for parents to help them be more involved in their children's lives



Mind

- ❖ NAYA sends positive messages
- ❖ Staff are called upon to fill multiples roles (e.g., guide and mentor)
- ❖ At NAYA, success includes engagement
- ❖ Allow for individual differences

How NAYA Services Contribute to Youth Success – Program Managers

Body

- ❖ Help families get affordable and stable housing
- ❖ Environment for skill building

Spirit

- ❖ Issue of hope – instilling a sense of future
- ❖ NAYA helps youth to create a positive image of self - youth are more likely to make good decisions when they are grounded in a solid sense of self, culture, and spirituality
- ❖ We don't give up on anyone – people are welcome back

Findings to Date: Youth Success

Culture/Cultural Connections

Finances

Employment

Education

Housing

Safety

Positive Behaviors

Avoid Risky Behaviors

Physical
Health

Emotional Health

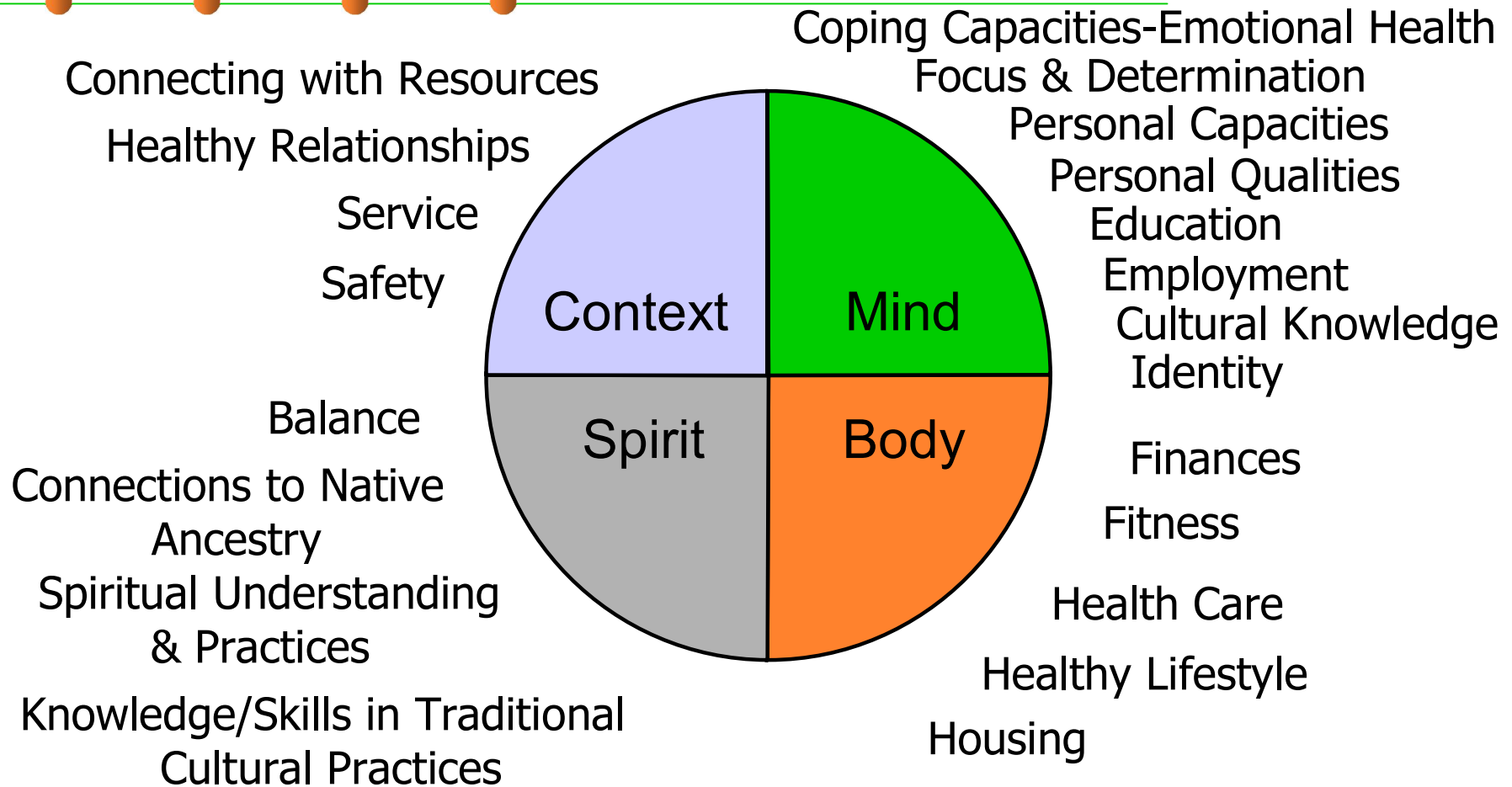
Healthy
Relationships

Family, elders, peers

Positive Community Relationships,
Contribution

Spirituality

Findings to Date: Youth Success



Questions for Discussion

- Are there any surprises in the findings that were presented?
- Is there anything missing from the findings?
- Is there anything else that you would like to know about this project?

Next Steps

- **Combine outcomes with responses to other focus group questions**

- Necessary supports
- Barriers to success
- Refining current programming
- Additional programming needed?

- **Community forum to share findings and get feedback (August 1, 2006)**

- **Convene a national project advisory committee**

